

Intermountain Region's General Conference entitled "Stewardships: The Art of Collaboration." Awards were presented to a number of individuals and partners who have worked long and hard with the National Park Service towards accomplishing the common goals of preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources within our national parks.

FCC—A BLACK HOLE

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, seven years ago some enterprising Texans came to the FCC seeking approval to deploy their innovative wireless technology. Alas, all these years later, they still await a ruling from the FCC. Once licensed, Northpoint Technology could offer consumers a low-cost service that would provide multi-channel video programming—including all local television stations—and high-speed access to the Internet.

As many of my colleagues know, incumbent DBS operators carry some local channels, but only in the largest television markets, and in no market do they carry all local stations on a must carry basis. My Congressional District, for instance, falls within two local television markets. My constituents in the seventh-ranked Dallas market can get four stations from DBS carriers, but that's less than one-third of the stations in the market. My constituents in the 94th ranked Waco market are unable to get any local stations from DBS carriers. If the FCC would grant licenses to Northpoint, all the stations in the Dallas and Waco markets would become available to consumers.

I would like to submit for the RECORD an editorial that appeared recently in the Wall Street Journal that examines Northpoint's struggle to obtain regulatory approval but raises broader issues. Namely, are our telecom regulators and regulations serving the New Economy or burdening it? At least in the case of Northpoint, I think we can all agree that regulators should not take seven years to approve the entry of a new competitor into the marketplace.

REVIEW & OUTLOOK: SPACE INVADERS

[From the Wall Street Journal June 5, 2001]

Space, as every Star Trek fan knows, is the final frontier, but Federal regulators behave as though it's already been conquered. All of it.

This behavior takes the form of spectrum allocation, a process by which the Federal Communications Commission decides who gets to use—and even how they must use—the invisible electromagnetic wavelengths that transmit radio, television, satellite and wireless phone signals.

The allocation system may have worked well enough when it was designed 80 years ago to broadcast first radio and later TV. But a proliferation of wireless innovations has led to increased demand for spectrum space, and the current method of doling it out, like all attempts at central planning, has resulted in an artificial shortage.

Wireless technologies, we'll add here, are but another way to sate America's thirst for

broadband Internet access, and we suspect that the slothful deployment of broadband has played a significant role in Nasdaq's struggles of late and the dot-com skid in general. In effect, government control of the airwaves has helped to create virtual queues.

One way that industry has responded to the FCC's frequency-hoarding is by developing ways to increase the capacity and efficiency of available spectrum. The idea is to share and reuse bandwidth with existing spectrum occupants, and without drowning out what's already being transmitted over the same frequency.

Northpoint Technology, for example, wants to offer a low-cost alternative to DirecTV and EchoStar, the direct broadcast satellite giants. Northpoint's plan is to use part of its capacity to offer channels like MTV and HBO, while using the other part to offer high-speed Internet and other data services. But before any of this can happen, Northpoint needs access to the spectrum. DirecTV and EchoStar, which already occupy the spectrum and would have to compete with Northpoint, are defending their turf. That's understandable, even if their claim that Northpoint's signal would interfere with theirs is largely bogus. Repeated independent studies and field tests have provided no evidence of anything extraordinary.

What we don't understand is the behavior of the FCC, which says it's still thinking about it. Northpoint first applied for the license in 1994, so the FCC has been thinking about it for seven years.

A provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act requires the FCC to act on new technology within 12 months, but never mind that. If fundamental reform of the allocation process isn't in the cards right now, the very least that regulators can do is allow the Northpoints out there to make innovative use of the available spectrum.

The larger issue is whether our telecom regulators and our telecom regulations are serving the New Economy or burdening it. How many would-be innovators have looked at Northpoint's ordeal and concluded, why bother? And how much longer must we wait for mass deployment of broadband? Something is in the way of all this happening sooner rather than later, and it's certainly not the technology.

FCC Commissioner Michael Powell has at least signaled an awareness of these problems. Last month, he told House appropriators that spectrum allocation "is on the top of my agenda" and that broadband deployment is a priority. Industry and consumers alike have reason to hope he means it.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to join in this special order. In honor of this important occasion and to recognize the contributions of hard working immigrants who have formed the backbone of this great country, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of restoring food stamp benefits for legal immigrants.

For over 30 years, food stamp eligibility was based solely on need. However, due to the 1996 Welfare Reform legislation, people became disqualified for food stamps based on

the immigration status. While this was partially repealed in 1998, there are still many immigrants, which include taxpaying parents working low-income jobs, children, disabled people, and many elderly people who arrived after 1996 and are ineligible for food stamps. In a country as great as the United States and where resources are plentiful, hardworking immigrants should not be denied crucial work supports such as food stamps.

As well, many citizen children of legal immigrants are hurt because of these eligibility restrictions. The vast majority of immigrant families are mixed status families that often include at least one U.S. Citizen, which is typically a child. There is a great deal of confusion about who is eligible for benefits and this deters immigrant families with children who are citizens from applying for food stamps. In fact, participation by these children with legal permanent resident parents declined 70% from 1994 to 1998, from 1.35 million to 350,000, more than twice the overall rate of participation decline for this period. A recent study by the Urban Institute reported that nationwide, 37 percent of all children of immigrants lived in families worried about or encountering difficulties affording food. Children are the future of this country and it is a tragedy that the greatest nation in the world would allow them to go hungry.

Congressman WALSH and Congresswoman CLAYTON recently introduced the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act, which I fully support. This bill would restore Food Stamp Program eligibility to all legal immigrants and make other modest improvements in the program for working families. This legislation is a step in the right direction in fighting the hunger problem in America and I would urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Our country is a nation of immigrants and we should recognize the important contribution they make to this country by restoring food stamp benefits to them. Mr. Speaker, thanks for allowing me to join with my colleagues to speak on this special order.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE 202ND COMBAT ENGINEERS, COMPANY B

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a group of World War II Veterans who helped change the course of history in Europe. Their contribution to the American war efforts is significant and they should be recognized for their contribution.

The 202nd Combat Engineers, Company B, was a unique group that was made up of young men from Ohio and the American Midwest. Trained as engineers at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, they preceded the infantry, during invasions, to cut roads, blow up pillboxes, remove mines and build bridges so the infantry could advance. The success of the ground forces was directly linked to the success or failure of the engineers.

During their assignment to the European Theater, the 202nd contributed to some of the